

MARYMOUNT CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY

Arts & Media Presents

Uncanny Valleys: Critical Discourse Through Computer Graphics

Curated by Misha Rabinovich MRabinovich@marymountcalifornia.edu



A still from Angela Washko's *Heroines with Baggage*

Los Angeles, (October 28th, 2013) — Marymount California University Department of Arts & Media are proud to present *Uncanny Valleys: Critical Discourse Through Computer Graphics* a contemporary art exhibition featuring the work of Andy Fedak and Angela Washko opening on November 7th with a reception from 6 to 9pm. Andy Fedak, hailing from Los Angeles, uses visual effects, video, and animation to deliver sublime reflections with profound allegories and celebrates the fragile yet vital aspects of utopia. Angela Washko, based in New York City and San Diego, is taking a feminist approach to deconstructing video games by staging interventions inside World of Warcraft and archiving the portrayal of women in the console-based role playing games she grew up playing. These artists work across media to engage with established critical discourse to reach across generations and suggest these ideas be revealed, renewed, and repossessed.



A still from Andy Fedak's *Orwell in Catalonia*

In her works such as *The Council on Gender Sensitivity and Behavioral Awareness in World of Warcraft*, Washko appropriates video and sound from her game experiences where she engages other players in discussions of gender while raising sensitivity and awareness to an often hilarious and sometimes disturbing effect. Despite the orcs and elves running around its lush fantasy environment, the social atmosphere inside WoW is incredibly hostile and rooted in discriminatory politics extending from outside the screen. Washko acts as a facilitator of conversations which question this exclusionary and oppressive language the player-base has adopted. In her ongoing project *Heroines with Baggage*—presented here for the first time on a custom-built 10 television video wall—Washko additionally looks at the ways in which representations of women in role-playing games formed her understanding of being a woman growing up.

Fedak interweaves evocative historical narratives with video and visual effects to elucidate contemporary implications within Orwell's writings from the trenches of the Spanish Civil War. George Orwell—the writer of *Animal Farm* and *1984*—traveled to Catalonia to fight against Franco's fascist Spain. After the fall of Spain to fascism, the decades of totalitarian dictatorship that followed, and finally Franco's death and return of democracy, it seems almost impossible to comprehend this utopian moment in which Orwell found himself. How could we feel what he felt?



Ice from Catalonia Installation & medical sacrament cups

To see this moment in history from his vantage point of believing a socialist utopia was possible? *Orwell in Catalonia* is an experimental journey tracing Orwell's path through the Spanish Civil War, documenting his exact locations, then utilizing contemporary animation and visual effects techniques to try to get back to the zeitgeist of that phantom utopia on the Catalan countryside - a moment which will all too soon turn into myth. Fedak brought ice back from Catalonia in order to amplify the affect created by the video's portrayal of water in all of its many states. We invite the audience to imbibe the slowly melting ice through medical/sacrament cups in order to grok the possibilities of collective state change.

General Information:

The Arcade Gallery is located in the Arcade Building in downtown San Pedro neighborhood of the Port of Los Angeles. Through the support of Marymount California University, the Arcade Gallery aims to bring vital contemporary art to students and the general public. *Uncanny Valleys* is the third show of the season and is curated by Misha Rabinovich, an artist and educator who came to Marymount California University upon winning the 2013-14 Ginsburg-Klaus Post MFA Engagement Fellowship.

Arcade Gallery
479 West 6th Street
San Pedro, CA 90731

Opening Reception: November 7th from 6pm to 9pm **Open:** November 7 - 27